

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for providing a secure time signal from a time source to a time requestor over a digital network, the method comprising

using an information object to request the secure time signal wherein the information object includes an identification of the requestor and a session key for transferring the secure time signal.
2. The method of claim 2, wherein the information object includes a ticket.
3. The method of claim 2, wherein the ticket is obtained from a key distribution center.
4. The method of claim 2, wherein the ticket is obtained from an authentication server.
5. The method of claim 2, wherein the ticket is obtained from a ticket-granting-server.
6. The method of claim 2, further comprising

associating a request for a secure time signal with the ticket;

transferring the ticket with the request to a secure time server; and

receiving a secure time signal from the secure time server.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the request includes a request message, the method further comprising

generating a nonce to be included in the request message;

including a service ticket for the secure time server in the request message; and

including a keyed checksum over the request message

8. The method of claim 6, wherein the secure time signal includes a reply message, the method further comprising

including a secure time signal;

including a nonce copied from the client request;

including a keyed checksum over the reply message

9. The method of claim 6, wherein the step of receiving a secure time signal includes the following substeps:

matching a nonce in the received message with the corresponding nonce in the sent message; and

confirming a keyed checksum.

10. The method of claim 6, further comprising

using the secure time signal to update a clock value.

11. An apparatus for providing a secure time signal to a time requestor over a digital network, the apparatus comprising

a process for accepting a ticket from the time requestor to request a secure time signal; and

a process for providing a secure time signal to the time requestor.

12. An apparatus for providing a secure time signal to a time requestor over a digital network, the apparatus comprising

means for accepting a ticket from the time requestor to request a secure time signal; and

means for providing a secure time signal to the time requestor.

13. A computer-readable medium including instructions for providing a secure time signal to a time requestor over a digital network, the computer-readable medium comprising

one or more instructions for accepting a ticket from the time requestor to request a secure time signal; and

one or more instructions for providing a secure time signal to the time requestor.